

Governor's Crime Commission
2009 Priority Legislative and Policy Recommendation

Criminal Justice Information Network Issues: Amend Session Law 2004-129

In 2004, the General Assembly directed OSBM in conjunction with others to develop a plan to consolidate the information technology infrastructure, staffing, and expenditures in executive branch departments where a statewide approach would be more economical (Session Law 2004-129). The ACT consolidates all of the state's disparate databases (excluding the Administrative Office of the Courts) (AOC) under the authority of the NC State Information Technology Services (ITS).

To better serve citizens of North Carolina and to meet the demands of our state's law enforcement and public safety agencies, existing disparate state and local criminal justice databases should be interoperable and integrated. The development and adoption of standards for entering, storing integrating and transmitting criminal justice information should fall under the authority of the Criminal Justice Information Network Governance Board (CJIN). CJIN was established for this very purpose. **It is recommended that public safety and law enforcement agencies be excluded from the authority of the ITS re: Senate Bill 991.**

Further, it is recommended that an Integrated Justice Information System (IJIS) Center be created and fall under the purview of the CJIN. Like the proposed NC Business Intelligence Competency Center (NCBICC), the focus of the IJIS Center will be to frame and promote the exchange of ideas, policies, procedures among law enforcement and public safety professionals. The criminal justice community recognizes the value of data integration and promotes data sharing as expressed by the CJLEADS data integration project. However, the approach of sharing and housing criminal justice data takes on different practices, policies and regulations dictated by state and federal guidelines. The purpose of the IJIS center, under the direction of CJIN, is to develop a strategy that identifies the technology and the business infrastructure needed to promote data sharing at the local and state level, when appropriate, among key stakeholders. Further, the IJIS center will work collaboratively with the NCBICC to achieve public data integration and criminal justice data integration, each being separate.

Rationale:

Public safety and law enforcement agencies recognize the value of interoperable systems and integrated criminal justice databases. Historically, best practices have been achieved by other states when the management and support of these databases, applications and infrastructure are lead by law enforcement and public safety agencies. FBI CJIS requirements, security policies, personnel security requirements, state and federal regulations and time sensitive matters are among some of the challenges that arise when managing and supporting sensitive data. It is imperative that the housing of this information be managed and supported by a law enforcement agency, a public safety agency, or a contractor that meets CJIS compliance. ..

The CJIN should be given all authority and responsibility for guiding and maintaining all law enforcement and public safety data information and communication systems. The CJIN should remain separate and apart from the oversight of the rest of state government IT systems, by virtue of the type of information that is stored within those systems and that is transmitted between law enforcement and public safety agencies, as well as the inclusion of a separate branch of government in the judicial department.

The fact that the AOC has not been under the purview of ITS, but the other state justice agencies have, has resulted in a disjointed and fragmented effort to achieve systems integration. The insufficient financial support and authority given to the CJIN has exacerbated this situation. Individual public safety and law enforcement agencies have focused on obtaining approval of their own unique needs for IT development and acquisition and to some extent ignored interface applications with other justice systems.

The CJIN should therefore be elevated to parallel status with ITS with respect to the criminal justice information system, and should have sole governing responsibility over public safety and law enforcement agencies' IT systems.

An IJIS center should comprise of public safety and law enforcement support professionals who manage and develop their respective databases. Work will center on technology and business infrastructure needs to promote data sharing at the local and state level. Policy and procedures recommendations shall be forwarded to the CJIN for approval.

Recommendations:

The Governor's Crime Commission recommends that the General Assembly:

Amend GS Session Law 2004-129 to exclude law enforcement and public safety from the authority of the ITS
re: Senate Bill 991

Appropriate funding to support the integration initiatives of CJIN

Direct (through legislative means) CJIN on matters related to law enforcement and public safety.

Establish an IJIS center that would fall under the purview of CJIN

Appoint a cross section of public safety and law enforcement professionals to the CJIN Board.